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PLANETARY PHENOMENA FOR JULY AND AUGUST, 1910.

By Malcolm McNeill.

PHASES OF THE MOON, PACIFIC TIME.

New Moon ...	July 6,	$1^h 20^m$ P.M.	New Moon ...	Aug. 4,	$10^h 37^m$ P.M.
First Quarter ..	" 14,	12 24 A.M.	First Quarter ..	" 12,	6 1 P.M.
Full Moon	" 22,	12 37 A.M.	Full Moon	" 20,	11 14 A.M.
Last Quarter ..	" 29,	1 34 A.M.	Last Quarter ..	" 27,	6 33 A.M.

The Earth is in aphelion or at greatest distance from the Sun on the morning of July 4th.

Mercury is a morning star on July 1st, having passed its greatest west elongation from the Sun on June 19th. It then rises about an hour and a quarter before sunrise and will be visible in the morning twilight under good weather conditions; but it is drawing nearer to the Sun and comes into conjunction with that body on the morning of July 19th. It then becomes an evening star and gradually moves out to eastern elongation, reaching this point on August 30th. The elongation 27° 14′ is much greater than the average, as it occurs only five days after aphelion, but the planet is 13° south of the Sun; so the interval between the setting of the Sun and of the planet is less than one hour, and it will hardly be possible to see the planet at this elongation. The latter half of the year is generally unfavorable for a view of the planet as an evening star, but affords the best opportunity for view as a morning star.

Venus is still a morning star, rising not quite two and one half hours before sunrise through July. During August the interval becomes less, being about one hour and fifty minutes at the end of the month. The maximum interval comes during the latter half of July. The apparent distance of the planet from the Sun diminishes continually during the two months, from 39° on July 1st to 21° on August 30th, but at the same time the greater southern motion of the Sun tends to increase the interval between the rising of the planet and of the Sun; and this partially counterbalances the diminution of the interval caused by the approach of the planet to the Sun. So *Venus* remains in fair position for observation.

Mars is still an evening star and remains so throughout the two months' period, but is too near conjunction for easy observation. On July 1st it sets a little less than two hours after sunset, on August 1st only one hour after, and on August 31st not quite half an hour later. It is too near the Sun for naked-eye observations during the last few days of July and throughout August. It moves from *Cancer* through *Leo* 38° eastward and 13° southward. On August 3d it passes 40′ north of the first magnitude star *Alpha Leonis,* a distance about one third more than the apparent diameter of the Sun or Moon. As the star and planet on that date both set less than an hour after sunset, naked-eye view will hardly be possible. The planet reaches it maximum distance from the Sun on July 22d, but it will continue slowly to increase in distance from the Earth until nearly the middle of September. It is about at its minimum brightness, and will change very little in this respect for several months.

Jupiter remains an evening star in the southwestern sky. It sets shortly before midnight on July 1st and at about 8 P. M., an hour and one half after sunset, on August 31st. It can therefore be easily seen throughout the two months, although its duration of visibility to the naked eye toward the end of August will not be long. It moves 8° eastward and 4° southward in the constellation *Virgo,* and at the end of August is not far from the first magnitude star *Spica, Alpha Virginis.*

Saturn rises at about 1 A. M. on July 1st and shortly after 9 P. M. on August 31st, so it is getting into position for late evening observation. It moves very slowly eastward until August 20th in the constellation *Aries* and then begins to retrograde. As seen in the telescope, the rings are wider open than they were before conjunction, the minor axis being nearly one third of the major. When the rings are at their widest opening the minor axis is not quite one half of the major; this epoch will not be reached for several years.

Uranus comes to opposition with the Sun on July 16th, and is then above the horizon the entire night. At the end of August it sets at about half after one in the morning. It is therefore in good position for observation throughout most of the night, and if any bright star were near it could be found with little difficulty on any clear moonless night; but, unfortunately, there are no bright stars near the planet to afford a means of easy identification. The planet is in *Sagittarius* east and north of the milk dipper group and moves about 2° northward during the two months.

Neptune comes to conjunction with the Sun on the night of July 11th, and is therefore not in good position for observation with a good telescope.